

ISSUE 12

SEPTEMBER 2021 · ELLUL 5781

THE GGS JOURNAL

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM GOLDERS GREEN SYNAGOGUE



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OUR NEW
WEBSITE



Golders Green
SYNAGOGUE

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THE GGS JOURNAL

GOLDERS GREEN SYNAGOGUE

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COMING UP AT GOLDERS GREEN SYNAGOGUE

As we continue the journey back to normality, we look forward to seeing you for a new season of programmes and events

SUKKAH DECORATING WORKSHOP
Sunday September 19

SUKKAH PARTY, 41 THE RIDGEWAY
Thursday September 23

SIMCHAT TORAH TEA
Tuesday September 28 (Shemini Atzeret)

ALEPH BET BLESSING FOR CHILDREN AGED 3-4
Shabbat October 2

IN CONVERSATION WITH RABBI BELOVSKI
Tuesday evenings, October 26, November 2, 9, 16

MITZVAH DAY
Sunday November 21

WINTER SHABBATON
Shabbat November 26/27

COMMUNAL CHANUKAH LIGHTING FOR 8TH NIGHT
Sunday December 5

Check out the new website for more information and booking details for all events: www.goldersgreenshul.org.uk

The GGS Journal is edited by Joel Clark (joel@joelsclark.com)
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To place an advert in the next edition of the magazine, please contact the Shul office.
Cover image: Launch of new GGS website, September 2021.

WELCOME

THE LAUNCH OF THE NEW-LOOK GGS COMES AT AN IMPORTANT MOMENT FOR OUR COMMUNITY, WRITES JOEL CLARK

On March 17 2020, when we held our final Shul service before the first lockdown, it seemed extraordinary that a public health emergency had necessitated the suspension of all in-person provision, including essential services such as our daily minyan and nursery. At least, we hoped, it wouldn't last more than a few weeks.

Through 18 months, three national lockdowns and severe restrictions in between, our community like all others has had to reinvent itself, moving many activities into a virtual world and ramping up welfare and support services. While we continue to live with the pandemic, the outlook now seems much more positive, thanks largely to the success of the vaccine programme.

Our Shul provision is almost back to normal, albeit with some restrictions continuing when the building is at its busiest. Being able to daven, learn, celebrate and even mourn together again has reminded us that while online programmes may have kept our community spirit alive during lockdown, they are no substitute for meeting in person.

And so we look ahead to a new year, and there is hope. Our services are busy, our diaries are filling up, and for the first time in a long while, we can plan a close-to-normal Yom Tov, with family and friends around the table. At GGS, we have developed a lovely new outdoor space for small programmes and have plans to redevelop part of the upstairs gallery during the coming year, which will create essential additional space as our community grows. Watch this space for further details.

This edition of *The GGS Journal* coincides with the launch of a new logo and website for our community, which will improve communication and engagement with both existing and new members. It has been 10 years since we last undertook this process, and a lot has changed since then. We now have a school and nursery on our site; our membership is growing; our professional staff has expanded; and our two minyanim have merged.

The new brand has been designed to reflect the authenticity and

AT GGS, WE TRY,
ALWAYS, TO BE
THE VERY BEST
THAT WE CAN BE

diversity of our community, and the wide range of provision for all ages and interests. We are a community where no two members are alike, where everyone is made to feel welcome regardless of who they are or where they come from.

Perhaps most significantly after the experience of the past 18 months, ours is a community that cares, genuinely, for everyone. We make meals and offer shopping for those who may be in need; we work hard to make sure there is a minyan for those saying Kaddish; we provide calls and visits to the elderly and the vulnerable. We try, always, to be the very best that we can be.

The launch of the new-look GGS comes at what we hope is the end of an unprecedented time in our community's history. As we begin 5782, let's hope and pray together that this will be a happier and healthier year for all.

Shana Tova u'Metuka.

JOEL CLARK
Chair, Golders Green Synagogue

YEAR OF HOPE

RABBI DR HARVEY BELOVSKI REFLECTS ON THE CHALLENGES OF THE PAST YEAR AND THE MORE HOPEFUL OUTLOOK FOR 5782

"And so, Lord, confer honour upon Your people, praise upon those who fear You and good hope upon those who seek You, eloquence to those who yearn for You, gladness to Your Land, rejoicing to Your city..."

I have always found this passage, taken from the Amidah prayer for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, to be one of the most inspirational of the Yom Tov season. But this year, the phrase 'good hope' seems especially important, something I'd like to explore through the incident of the spies, recorded in Bemidbar (Numbers) chapters 13-14.

Our ancestors were just three days' journey from the Promised Land, yet as the denouement of the Exodus and desert sojourn approached, the people became restless. Unsure if they could make the transition from the divinely protected desert incubator to the challenges of 'real' life in the Land, they sent a dozen men to scout it out. The people's response to the scouts' negative report delayed their entry to the Land for 40 years and changed the course of Jewish history.

Curiously, the Torah immediately segues into a seemingly unrelated topic – the offerings that will be brought "when you will have come to your homeland that I [God] am giving you" (Bemidbar 15). Yet in this obscure juxtaposition lies one

of the Torah's greatest messages of hope. Ramban (13th century commentator) explains that the people feared that the cycle of sin and failure would repeat itself and that their children would never actually enter the Land. As such "God saw fit to comfort them – by instructing them about laws that pertained only in the Land, He reassured them that He knew for sure that they would eventually enter and inherit it."

Rabbi Sacks zt"l often mentioned that leaders must personify and teach hope. The spies were chosen for their leadership qualities, yet failed in their core mission, instead spreading despondency about the future of the Jewish people. So, when the people reached 'rock bottom', God Himself intervened to convey a message of hope and reassurance about their future.

The last 18 months have been extraordinarily challenging. Thank God, the miracle of vaccination has now reduced the threat, but devastating loss of life and suffering have affected every community across the globe. The Jewish community has also been shaken recently by a distressing rise in antisemitic attacks, both in-person and online – sadly, the 'Oldest Hatred' is alive and growing.



THE YAMIM NORAIM WILL BE A SEASON OF HOPE, IN WHICH WE LOOK FORWARD TO GROWTH, SUCCESS AND POSITIVE CHANGE

Yet there are many reasons to feel hopeful and upbeat about the coming year, especially within our wonderful community. We have plans to re-establish and improve every facet of our provision and develop our physical infrastructure, while acknowledging that the pandemic has permanently changed some aspects of communal life.

Above all, the Yamim Noraim this year will be a season of hope and optimism, one in which I know we can look forward to growth, success and positive change for our community, Israel and all humanity.

Vicki and I, together with Michali, with Yoav and Shoshana, Tehilloh, Dovid Chaim, Tomor Chemdoh, Rochel Tiferes, Shmuel Yosef and Moshe Simcha, wish you a happy, healthy and hopeful 5782.

RABBI HARVEY BELOVSKI

REALISING INDIVIDUALITY

AS THE PANDEMIC RESTRICTIONS ARE GRADUALLY EASED, RABBI SAM AND REBBETZIN DR HADASSAH FROMSON REFLECT ON THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT LIE AHEAD

Rosh Hashanah is the holiday of our individuality. On Rosh Hashanah, the Mishnah tells us, all who dwell on earth pass before God's scrutiny, "kivnei maron", like sheep passing before a shepherd to be counted one by one, assessed as to whether we have lived up to our potential over the past year. Rosh Hashanah is the day on which we affirm the importance of our individual choices, and our capacity for renewal.

This has been another year of limited choices, of restrictions on our individuality, and impositions on our freedom. How should this affect the way we approach Rosh Hashanah?

Irvin Yalom is a leading existential psychologist who draws deeply on the world of philosophy in his therapeutic practice. In one account of a session, he describes bringing in Nietzsche's famous thought experiment and asking a client: "Would you be willing to live this past year again and again for all eternity?"

The client answers "No! No way would I want to live fixed in this trap forever!" Yalom describes how he then coaxes the client towards an understanding of what regrets they have about their actions, and what they might have done differently. The therapeutic punchline is a powerful one. He asks the client: "What is to stop you making those changes now?"



WHAT WE SEEK TO UNDERSTAND IS HOW WE CAN HARNESS THE POWER OF RENEWAL THAT ROSH HASHANAH BRINGS

We have all had a year that we certainly did not expect. Despite setbacks, it has been remarkable to see the resilience of our community. It feels like normality is resuming, but what do we want to make sure we don't regret when we come to next Rosh Hashanah? How can we maximise our potential in our given environment? These are the questions we each need to ask ourselves at an individual level.

We are so grateful that we have recently been able to support youth programming led by our wonderful youth directors Tova Liebert and Shira Silber, as well as resuming the Bnei Mitzvah programme for a third season, now back to in-person rather than online. We have welcomed people to outdoor kiddushim, run learning programmes and helped couples prepare for weddings. We love seeing ever-increasing numbers of people, including families with young children, coming back

to Shul, and giving shiurim and drashot in person again is a joy.

Ultimately, what we seek to understand at this time of year is how can we can harness that power of renewal that Rosh Hashanah brings to reinvigorate our lives, both physically and the spiritually.

We all have individual choices to make. How will I allocate my time and energy over this upcoming year? What opportunities will I seek out to actualise my potential? As a community, we seek to create a framework that gives each of us the space, support and inspiration to create and seize those opportunities. With the help G-d, we should all merit a year ahead of health and happiness when we can take advantage of all that community life has to offer.

RABBI SAM AND REBBETZIN DR HADASSAH FROMSON

THE CHIEF RABBI'S ROSH HASHANAH MESSAGE 5782

In 1968, social psychologists Bibb Latané and John Darley conducted a remarkable study, known as the Smoky Room Experiment.

Subjects were placed alone in a room and asked to complete a task. While they were doing so, smoke began to fill the room from a nearby air vent. Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of subjects reported the smoke within a matter of minutes. However, when subjects were placed in the same room in groups, the results were dramatically different. Rather than reporting the smoke, the subjects looked to one another. If the others in the room seemed unmoved by the smoke, it was ignored.

The authors of the study observed that if people are alone when they notice an emergency, they consider themselves solely responsible for dealing with it. However, when others are also present, they feel less of a responsibility for taking action.

As social beings, we often cannot help but use the actions of others as our frame of reference for the way in which we choose to behave. This poses a profound challenge to our society. Can we lead more environmentally sustainable lives or act cautiously to prevent the spread of Covid when those around us seem disinclined to do the same? Can we lead lives of responsibility and morality when those around us do not?

The Jewish answer to this challenge is our High Holy Days.



The Torah reading for Rosh Hashanah seems a surprising choice. On the anniversary of the creation of the world, we would surely expect to read about the creation from the Book of Genesis. Instead, we read the story of a person who was born into a world of idolatry and sacrilege. Yet Abraham, the father of our people, repeatedly demonstrated his commitment to Hashem without hesitation. He became the first parent in our tradition to circumcise his son and was even prepared to countenance sacrificing him.

While not hiding behind the standards and expectations of those around him, Abraham knew what Hashem required of him. No amount of social pressure could dissuade him from his life of truth and sanctity.

On the Yamim Noraim, each one of us stands, accountable for our deeds, before Hashem. As we recite so powerfully in our Musaf prayers: Just as a shepherd appraises his flock; just as he passes every sheep beneath his staff; so too, every one of us is counted and evaluated by

Hashem. There is nobody for us to hide behind, nor anyone for us to blame. As such, our High Holy Days are a moment of the purest and most honest dialogue with our Creator. He knows every challenge we face as well as our capacity to rise to them.

The last 18 months have been a period of extraordinary adversity, which has imposed challenges upon us all in ways that we may only be beginning to understand. As we enter 5782, the High Holy Days provide a precious opportunity for each one of us to look deep within ourselves and reframe our attitude and our behaviour. Let us be guided by our eternal Torah values rather than the transient whims of others. In doing so, may we all be blessed with a future of spiritual fulfilment, joy and success.

Shana Tovah,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ephraim Mirvis'.

CHIEF RABBI EPHRAIM MIRVIS

JEWISH CARE

A NEW YEAR WITH JEWISH CARE

We all hope that the new year will be a better one for all of us. Over the past year we have continued to support and connect with the community, who have needed Jewish Care more than ever. We look forward to welcoming our members back to community services carefully and safely as they reopen.

Since the start of the pandemic, with the help of our community's incredible volunteers, we have delivered over 70,000 Meals on Wheels and made the same number of befriending calls to support older, isolated members of the community. Our Social Work and Family Carers Teams have also been there for support too.

Alongside this, hundreds of people have been joining our JC Presents programme of online events and activities, staying engaged whilst combating loneliness and isolation. We are delighted to welcome people back to our community centres for in-person activities and will continue to run our online programme alongside this.

97-year-old Helen lives alone and previously visited Jewish Care's Michael Sobell Jewish Community Centre once a week. Volunteers from the Centre kept in touch with her throughout the pandemic. We also delivered an iPad to Helen, supporting her to join Zoom events and online social groups. She is thankful to have reconnected with friends virtually and is very pleased to be coming back to our Michael Sobell Jewish Community Centre too.

"So many of our members have shown incredible resilience over the last year," says Jewish Care chief executive, Daniel Carmel-Brown. "We have missed them dearly and are very happy to be able to see them again in person as we approach the new year. There has been a huge uptake in our digital events, but for some, this has been no substitute for the company and comfort that in-person activity can offer.



"WE RELY ON THE GENEROSITY OF OUR SUPPORTERS AGAIN THIS ROSH HASHANAH TO KEEP OUR COMMUNITY SERVICES AND MANY OTHER SERVICES WE PROVIDE GOING, SO WE CAN CONTINUE TO BE THERE FOR EVERYONE THAT NEEDS US, NOW AND IN THE FUTURE."

You can make a donation to Jewish Care's Rosh Hashanah Appeal online at www.jewishcare.org/donate or by calling 020 8922 2222.

THE YEAR IN PICTURES

2020-2021

AS PANDEMIC RESTRICTIONS INCREASED DURING THE AUTUMN AND WINTER, MANY PROGRAMMES SWITCHED ONLINE, WITH INTERMITTENT OPPORTUNITIES TO MEET OUTDOORS WHEN PERMITTED

WINTER SHABBATON TAKES PLACE ONLINE WITH RABBI BELOVSKI LEADING DAVENING AND REBBETZIN VICKI BAKING CHALLAH, FEBRUARY 2021

PARSHA MAGIC WITH REBBETZIN HADASSAH AND THE GREAT BENJINI, AND, BELOW, THE ANNUAL SIMCHAT TORAH TEA ONLINE, OCTOBER 2020

ONLINE PROGRAMMES INCLUDED 'MEET THE LORDS', BRIAN BECKMAN'S MEGILLAH AND A MITZVAH DAY COOK-OFF

PROGRAMMES FOR TU B'SHVAT WITH MATHEW FRITH AND YOM HA'ATZMAUT WITH DANIEL TAUB



LITTLE GOLDIES, 2020-21

LITTLE GOLDIES NURSERY COMPLETED A FOURTH SUCCESSFUL YEAR IN JULY, LEARNING AND CELEBRATING THROUGH PLAY, FRIENDSHIPS, EXPLORATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPING THEIR JEWISH IDENTITIES IN A WARM, WELCOMING SETTING

SOCIAL,
EMOTIONAL
AND PERSONAL
DEVELOPMENT



PROMOTING
HEALTHY EATING,
MOVEMENT AND
SHAPE, SPACE AND
MEASURING



COMMUNICATION
IN ENGLISH AND
IVRIT THROUGH
STORIES, SONGS
AND LISTENING



EXPLORING THE
WORLD OUTDOORS
USING NATURAL
RESOURCES



SCIENCE OF VACCINATION

THE EXTRAORDINARY SUCCESS OF THE VACCINATION CAMPAIGN AGAINST COVID-19 IS BUILT ON A LONG HISTORY OF SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY STRETCHING BACK SEVERAL HUNDRED YEARS, WRITES BENNY CHAIN

The idea that prior exposure to an infectious disease could result in long-term protection against subsequent exposure probably goes back to antiquity. But the fundamental insights which explained just how our bodies can recognise, react to and ultimately neutralise invading viruses or bacteria emerged from the work of a small group of European scientists towards the latter part of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century.

A key personality was a remarkable German Jewish scientist, Paul Ehrlich. Paul's father was an innkeeper in Silesia, but Paul was able to study medicine in Breslau and Leipzig, and eventually became director of the Institute for Infectious Diseases in Berlin, and then in Frankfurt. His discovery of Salvarsan, the first chemical drug against syphilis, laid the foundations for both chemotherapy and ultimately the antibiotic era. Not satisfied with these remarkable contributions and frustrated by the toxicity of the drugs he had developed, Ehrlich turned his attention to immunity, the study of the human body's natural defences against infection.

Building on the efforts of colleagues in Germany and France, he proposed the idea that some of our white blood cells (now known as B cells) release 'antibodies', tiny structures beyond the resolution of even the most powerful

microscopes of the time, which would fit tightly onto an invading micro-organism, blocking its activity and preventing it from damaging its human host.

In order to reproduce, viruses like COVID-19 must first dock onto the surface of a human (lung) cell. Only then can the virus penetrate into the cell, where it can multiply thousands of times and ultimately kill it, escaping to start the deadly cycle once more. As Ehrlich envisaged, our white cells are able to make antibodies that recognise and bind to the surface of COVID-19 so precisely that they can totally block its ability to dock with its target cell, and thus render the virus harmless – a process known as neutralisation.

The details of how we can make billions of different antibodies, each with remarkable specificity for a different micro-organism, and together create a system which is able to protect us against almost any infection, took another century and thousands of hours of dedicated work to sort out. But the crucial concept – that it would be sufficient to expose our body to just the tiny and harmless component of the virus (the spike), which allows it to dock on the surface of our lung cells – follows directly from Ehrlich's hypothesis.

This idea provides the fundamental rationale for the Pfizer, Moderna and AstraZeneca subunit vaccines, which have proved so effective and saved so many lives over the past year.

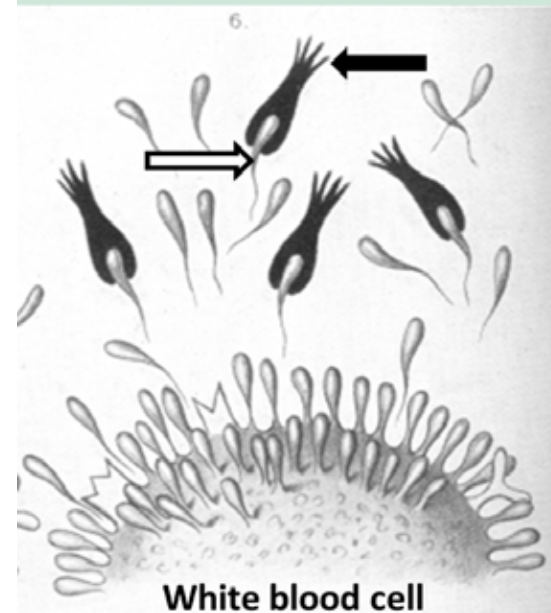


ILLUSTRATION ADAPTED FROM PAUL EHRLICH'S 1900 CROONIAN LECTURE, DELIVERED TO THE ROYAL SOCIETY. IT SHOWS A WHITE BLOOD CELL RELEASING ANTIBODIES FROM ITS SURFACE (WHITE ARROW), SOME OF WHICH ATTACH THEMSELVES TIGHTLY TO A PART OF AN INVADING MICRO-ORGANISM (BLACK ARROW), THUS BLOCKING ITS ABILITY TO CAUSE DAMAGE.

Of course, vaccination is not an infallible cure for everything. The incredible specificity of our immune system is, in some ways, also its Achilles heel. By changing their shape even slightly, many viruses, bacteria and parasites can escape recognition by the vaccine-induced antibodies. Fortunately, this 'immune escape' has been limited in the case of COVID-19, but it remains one of the main reasons why millions of people continue to die every year from HIV, malaria and influenza. It is also why new emerging infectious diseases remain an ever-present threat against which we must remain constantly vigilant.

PROFESSOR BENNY CHAIN
Professor of Immunology,
University College London

LIFE OF A VACCINATOR

With impeccable timing, I retired as a GP on March 31 2020 just as the COVID-19 pandemic started. A chance meeting with Dr Alec Goldin led to an opportunity to see patients face to face, which meant I needed to be vaccinated against COVID. Off I went to Temple Fortune Health Centre, a local vaccinating hub, where another chance meeting led to my volunteering as a vaccinator.

Vaccinators need to undergo online training, much of which as a GP I could thankfully avoid. A practical training session followed and then I was good to go. In keeping with the best traditions of the NHS, it was a case of see one, do one and then teach one. So after a couple of sessions, I was suddenly a vaccinating trainer.

At the Temple Fortune centre, all the vaccinating is done in a marquee but is essentially outside. We have vaccinated in all weathers, from snow to brilliant sunshine. Much of the vaccination programme's success is due to Dame Kate Bingham and her team, but the tsunami of volunteers has played the most amazing part in its implementation. We have marshals, security, triage doctors, vaccinators, site managers and data clerks, 90% of whom are volunteers.

The Jewish community has

contributed hugely to the success of the enterprise, with Hatzola giving incredible support. The sense of camaraderie has been outstanding and attracted a large number of volunteers who return time and time again, even in the most inclement weather. I have worked with people I was at school with, at university with, trained with and worked with. It was uplifting to be part of such a successful and compassionate team.

At Temple Fortune, we were vaccinating 1000 patients a day, which meant a new person every three minutes. We needed to make everyone feel special, but not so much that they'd want to stop and chat. Unfortunately there wasn't time to discuss the options of Pfizer versus AstraZeneca – it was a one-choice option. Some dressed appropriately with short sleeves or even holes in their sleeves. Some clearly had forgotten how to dress for a vaccination!

People have been immensely kind and the vast majority have been so grateful for our help. People brought us food, presents or just their heartfelt thanks, which is so gratifying. For some patients, especially the elderly, a trip to the vaccinating centre was their first outside activity for more than a year. I have vaccinated people in

HAVING BEEN PART OF THE UK'S EXTRAORDINARY COVID-19 VACCINATION PROGRAMME, DR DINA KAUFMAN GIVES AN INSIGHT INTO LIFE AS A VACCINATOR AT TEMPLE FORTUNE HEALTH CENTRE



DINA KAUFMAN VACCINATES HER HUSBAND, ROB GINSBURG, AT TEMPLE FORTUNE HEALTH CENTRE

their cars who were too frightened to come into the centre, and those who have come dressed up to celebrate.

Vaccinating has given me a feeling of involvement in the national effort to free us from the shackles of lockdown. It has been both a humbling and hugely inspiring experience. One patient asked me to wait while she said a prayer of thanks. It was so moving, and a moment of hope and courage.

DR DINA KAUFMAN

STEERING RIMON THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

I can't pretend it has been an easy year. COVID has presented many unexpected challenges, which we have navigated as best we could, always putting the children's wellbeing front and centre. I began my new role in September, a new school year starting after the first lockdown, which had been an unprecedented and disruptive experience for children, parents and teachers alike.

My first objective was getting to know the children. For me, it was extremely important that they got to know me, to understand that although I was new to the role, they could be sure that I had their very best interests at heart. I put targets in place to raise standards; I wrote a new behaviour strategy to support all children to learn and understand themselves; and I met with each member of staff to begin the essential relationships that can steer positive change.

Then schools once again closed to the the majority of children in January 2021. I stayed positive and took our amazing staff on the journey with me, into teaching in a way that none of us were trained for to ensure, first and foremost, that the children of Rimon felt connected.

This third lockdown had the biggest impact on everyone. At this point, children were desperately in need of routine, safety and opportunities

to socialise with their peers. I worked hard to create a home learning provision that kept the children in touch with the school community and their friends. All children had a full schedule of live learning on Zoom, together with whole-school Tefilla (prayers) every morning. We also managed to celebrate special occasions such as Purim as a community. My daughter Zoe and I made Tu B'Shvat gifts and hand-delivered them to all home learners to continue that sense of connection. I worked with several children on a one-to-one basis on Zoom throughout lockdown and encouraged other staff members to do the same.

When I interviewed for this role, I was asked about the importance of community and how to give a sense of this to our young people. I referred to the survival of the boys and their football coach in the Thai cave in 2018. Yes, there was an element of luck, but equally it was a sense of togetherness that connected them and enabled them to feel hope even in moments of absolute despair. I have thought about this many times during the year and tried, in all my decisions, to enhance the Rimon community spirit.

We were delighted when all children finally returned to school in person. We had a productive and brilliant summer term where our main aim was to help every child

SARAH SIMMONS, WHO JOINED RIMON JEWISH PRIMARY SCHOOL AS HEADTEACHER IN SEPTEMBER 2020, REFLECTS ON HER FIRST ACADEMIC YEAR AT THE HELM



to be seen, heard and valued – to reconnect them to their school and friends, and in turn to identify learning gaps. The running club that I introduced for years 3-6 every Tuesday morning before school has been great fun and has boosted this sense of connection for the children and for parents, who are invited to run with the children.

Reflecting on the year, I am so proud of the entire Rimon community. I truly believe that together we have faced and fought the unique challenges and ultimately had a really successful year, with thriving children, happy parents and a stronger, closer staff community. I pray that we have now seen the back of the pandemic, that we can continue to build on the strong foundations and relationships forged this past year and that we can have a more straightforward 2021/22 academic year.

SARAH SIMMONS
Headteacher, Rimon Jewish Primary School

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"Pomegranates are known for their goodness and energy giving properties.

Even though we have not been able to meet together physically, through each virtual art workshop, we always feel a boost of energy, wellbeing and camaraderie.

These sessions recharge us all with the nutrients of mutual support and understanding, which carry us through the week ahead."

The Chai Art Workshop Group
(Artist Carmella Ovadia)

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chai cancer care
together we can cope

JONATHAN SACKS, 1948–2020

FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF RABBI LORD SACKS ZT”L IN NOVEMBER 2020, BRIAN BECKMAN PAYS TRIBUTE TO HIS RABBI, TEACHER AND FRIEND, WHO SERVED AS RABBI OF GOLDERS GREEN SYNAGOGUE FROM 1978 UNTIL 1982

I first got to know Rabbi Sacks in the early 1970s, when I became chairman of the Hillel Foundation Education Committee. Rabbi Cyril Harris had been appointed the new director and was determined to shake up the rather moribund committee and to attract new, young academics. Jonathan Sacks was then a philosophy teacher at Jews’ College and, with other young academics, the committee became a powerhouse of ideas and the fount of many major educational programmes at Hillel House.

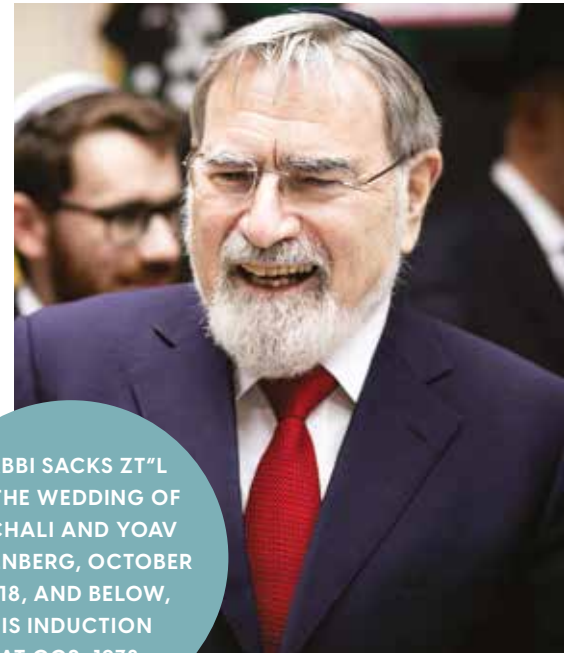
So it was that I already knew Rabbi Sacks quite well when, in 1978, he became the favoured candidate to succeed Rabbi Newman as Rabbi of our Shul. He was good enough to say at the time that it was because of Leslie Green, our formidable senior warden, and myself, that he accepted the invitation to become our Rabbi.

He came with no experience of United Synagogue Shuls, let alone

of being a Rabbi of one. His earlier life was spent in shtiebls and briefly he had been a Shabbat Rabbi at Luton. But because of that he came with no inhibitions and plenty of ideas. Leslie Green, an experienced warden of the old school, was there to rein him in if necessary, but was sensible enough to let Rabbi Sacks’ imagination have (more or less) free rein.

Because Rabbi Sacks knew me, he at once enlisted my services as one of his right-hand men (and women). It so happened that my mother died a few days after he began his rabbinate and I believe that her funeral may have been the first one he conducted. Certainly, he admitted to me, when I asked him questions about Avelut (mourning), that this was a subject not taught in the Semicha programme, so we sat down with a Shulchan Aruch and learned the laws of Avelut together.

I will always remember the advice he gave me then – that the year of Avelut was not intended to be a sad time, but rather required the carrying out of good deeds, charitable work and communal involvement in order to replace the merits which had departed with the deceased. This is advice which I have always tried to pass on to Avelim (mourners), and it was because of this that I devoted my



RABBI SACKS ZT”L AT THE WEDDING OF MICHALI AND YOAV GREENBERG, OCTOBER 2018, AND BELOW, HIS INDUCTION AT GGS, 1978



next years to communal service in the Shul.

Rabbi Sacks’ great talent was that he could inspire people. He could identify potential workers and inspire them to become involved and implement his ideas.

He found a congregation that was focused mainly on services, with some shiurim and charity work. The only social/cultural activity was the Cultural and Literary Society, which attracted mainly older members. I did not

know many members of the congregation – just those I saw in Shul, and my contact with them went no further than that.

He created a community, especially among the younger members. He brought them together, whether they went to services or not.

His two great innovations were the 3Gs and the Adult Education Programme. The 3Gs (‘Golders Green Group’) was a social and educational group for the under 40s – both married and single. Rabbi Sacks’ fundamental principle was that you cannot have a successful group without food, so every month there was a dinner in the Shul hall, cooked by us, with a guest speaker, often very well known. There were also monthly study sessions. Through this, we were able to become friends, often close friends, with members of the community we would otherwise never have met.

The Adult Education Programme was the first of its kind in the United Synagogue. Now, of course, they are everywhere. Arranged in terms, it met weekly. There were lectures in the main hall – either as a series or one-offs. There were also smaller sessions elsewhere on basic Judaism and Hebrew reading. Apart from Rabbi Sacks himself, there were well-known speakers, including some from Israel. I recall Rabbi Lopes Cardozo and Professor Gottlieb. The lectures were very well attended by people from all over northwest London.

I do not believe that Rabbi Sacks would have described himself as an essentially pastoral Rabbi. There was a full-time Chazan who did

most of the pastoral work. But he was a catalyst for his congregants, raising their sense of community and dedication to Judaism to new levels. The services became livelier and more informal, symbolised by his discarding the canonical wear which was then the norm in the United Synagogue. Simchat Torah was a rave – he imported friends of his from Lubavitch for the occasion.

His sermons were uniformly brilliant. I do not believe he has surpassed them since. He had no inhibition as to what he spoke about and how. I recall on Parshat Pinchas (I believe it was his trial Shabbat), he opened his remarks by paraphrasing Danny Kaye with, “This is a Sidra which begins in the middle for the benefit of the people who came in the middle.” That was mind-blowing coming from a United Synagogue pulpit.

Then there was a Shabbat when quite unexpectedly overnight there was a heavy snowstorm and he delivered an off-the-cuff sermon entirely on the subject of snow. One Pesach he preached every day (including Shabbat), each one an entirely different type of sermon. People came to Shul just to hear him. He once told me that he would never repeat a sermon, even one he had prepared but had not given.

Other innovations included a Tikkun Leil Shavuot (held in my house), a Sunday morning service and breakfast for post-bar mitzvah boys (alumni included Daniel Greenberg); and family weekends away for the 3Gs (at Yakar, then in an old mansion in

Stanmore) with a full educational and social program. For the families that participated, they were unforgettable.

He never gave a regular shiur for the community, although it was my and Moshe Cohn’s privilege to study with him weekly for a time. My impression was that he was learning just as much as we were as we went along.

When his Rabbinate finished, he remained with us, sitting in the body of the Shul, he on one side and Dayan Swift on the other. In the interregnum, pending the appointment of Rabbi Binstock, he and Dayan Swift would take the pulpit on alternating Shabbatot. A notorious episode began when Rabbi Sacks described Ariel Sharon’s invasion of southern Lebanon as a Chillul Hashem. The following week, Dayan Swift vented his ire on him, objecting to his accusing the government of Israel of a Chillul Hashem, and making disparaging remarks

about “philosophers”. This continued for a few weeks, and I believe some people came just for the fireworks.

Rabbi Sacks was a great personal friend and life support to me, and I shall miss his teaching

and his advice. We went to cricket matches together. He was my son Joshua’s sandek (his first time – he was squeamish) and spoke at his bar mitzvah and under his chuppah. He delivered hespedim (eulogies) for my wife Rosalind and my son Daniel. His passing leaves a deep void in my heart.

BRIAN BECKMAN

RABBI SACKS WAS A GREAT PERSONAL FRIEND AND LIFE SUPPORT TO ME, AND I SHALL MISS HIS TEACHING AND ADVICE

JONATHAN DAVIES, 1962–2021

FORMER FINANCIAL REPRESENTATIVE AND DEDICATED MEMBER JONATHAN DAVIES Z"l PASSED AWAY IN MAY 2021. PETER ZINKIN AND MONROE PALMER PAY TRIBUTE TO THEIR FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE

Jonathan was a force for good in the many organisations with which he worked – the Shul, the Liberal Democrats, the Board of Deputies, and Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel. Since he moved to Golders Green around 15 years ago, he was indispensable in helping to run the Shul, for many years as financial representative.

Jonathan's journey to Golders Green was an odyssey around London. Brought up in Stanmore and Hatch End, his family relocated to New Barn near Longfield in Kent, and Jonathan went to Gravesend Grammar School, then to Christchurch College, Oxford and the College of Law to qualify as a solicitor. He was then living in Brighton where the family moved following his father's retirement.

Jonathan's first home was in Tottenham. He moved to Hendon and then to Golders Green. He lived in Carlton Close and was an active member and office holder of the Residents' Association.

In his professional life, Jonathan was a partner and head of the financial services team at a large City law firm, having joined as an articled clerk. He had an enthusiasm for corporate litigation, once recounting how he had the satisfaction of seizing someone's Rolls Royce while an articled clerk.

Jonathan took early retirement to enjoy travelling and devote more time to politics and the Shul. He managed to travel to most parts of the world, including India, China, Russia, Japan, Egypt, East and South Africa, South America, the US, much of Europe, and many times to Israel.

Jonathan's work for the Liberal Democrats will be recounted by others, but I paid tribute to him at the Barnet Council meeting following his death, as follows:

Jonathan was a close friend. Despite our political differences, we shared a love of politics and together for many years we ran the synagogue in Dunstan Road. In 2014, we stood against each other in Childs Hill (where he had been a Liberal Councillor in the late 90s). Hoping that one of us would be elected, we agreed that whoever won, the other would take full responsibility for the synagogue.

I won by a very small margin, and as he always did, Jonathan took on the burden that is running a



synagogue. At the subsequent general election where he was the Liberal Democrat parliamentary candidate and places for the count were tight, I was his guest for the count.

Jonathan was the backbone of all the organisations that he worked for. He was a remarkable administrator and in a quiet and unassuming way, he created order out of chaos or mild disorder, depending on the organisation, and then ran things brilliantly with the most detailed records and miraculously always balanced the books.

His last terrible illness manifested itself as he was having a Friday night dinner with my wife and I and terribly sadly, 16 months later, he is no longer with us.

He will be missed by all those who knew him. He will be missed by the organisations he helped to run, and as friends are very precious, he will be greatly missed by my wife and me.

PETER ZINKIN

LIFELONG LIBERAL DEMOCRAT

Susette and I knew Jonathan as a lifelong Liberal Democrat, a valuable member of Golders Green Synagogue, and most of all a longstanding personal friend. I always knew that Jonathan was the person to go to for help and assistance, which was always given willingly, with kindness and consideration.

His work for the Liberal Democrats was legendary. He was chair of the English Party of the Liberal Democrats and was a vice president of the Federal Party. He was parliamentary candidate in Finchley and Golders Green. At the last general election, he was agent for the Liberal Democrat candidate, Luciana Berger.

Jonathan was a councillor in the London Borough of Barnet in the time of the joint Liberal Democrat/Labour administration. He was an executive member of Barnet Liberal Democrats, and before moving to Barnet he was chair of Haringey Lib Dems. He was an officer of Lib Dem Lawyers.

As President of Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel (LDFI), I pay tribute to the work he did over many years as the organisation's treasurer and vice chair. He was a passionate Zionist and, for LDFI, led political delegations to Israel, ensuring that parliamentarians could see for themselves the wonder of Israel and be inspired by Jonathan's enthusiasm.

We always knew that any organisation in which Jonathan was involved would be run morally and within the law – very important in the current political world. We will miss his insight, his warmth and companionship, especially, but not only, on our memorable delegations to the Middle East. We miss his contributions, his presence, his valuable input and his tremendous and unstinting commitment.

He is survived by his brother Neil and sister-in-law Suzanne. Our thoughts are with them and we wish them a long life. Susette and I are proud to have called Jonathan our friend. He is missed by so many people.

MONROE PALMER

SHUL DEVOTEE EXTRAORDINAIRE

Jonathan Davies z"l was an extraordinary individual. He was a friend, colleague and Shul devotee extraordinaire. Jonathan arrived in our community in 2005 and soon became an active and eventually pivotal member of our Shul, serving for many years as an outstanding treasurer, attendee and supporter of every minyan, activity, dinner and shiur.

Jonathan's friends, acquaintances, admirers in our community and beyond experienced Jonathan always smiling, always welcoming, always happy to see people, pleased to be doing things for others in our community and beyond.

Jonathan displayed an extraordinary measure of esteem for others who were often younger, less experienced and less knowledgeable. Yet he made everyone feel comfortable, retaining his objectivity and was able to listen to, consider and respect the views of others. This ability to connect non-judgementally with others extended to Jonathan's own reputation as a consummate host, inviting new members of the Shul to his home, as well as being a desirable guest – he ate with my family on many memorable occasions.

Since Jonathan was taken ill in February 2020, everyone at the daily minyan has thought about him and missed him every single day, recognising his extraordinary contribution to every facet of our community's existence. This is something said lightly, but rarely true in the way it was about Jonathan.

Jonathan was exceptional in his dependability. For a busy man, a successful lawyer until early retirement, someone deeply involved in politics, and with a hectic travel schedule, his dependability was quite remarkable. His loyalty and respect for others were legendary – a true role model.

Each of us was enriched by knowing Jonathan and his legacy, evident in every area of our community's life, is immeasurable.

RABBI DR HARVEY BELOVSKI

This is an extract from a eulogy given at Jonathan's funeral. The full version is available on the GGS YouTube channel.

SHANA TOVA U'METUKA

ELLUL 5781

ROSH HASHANAH GREETINGS FROM MEMBERS OF GOLDERS GREEN SYNAGOGUE

BEN GARCIA

Micol and Jonathan wish the whole community at Dunstan Road a Shana Tova, a happy and healthy sweet new year

CHAIN

Julia and Benny wish everyone a happy, healthy and peaceful new year

CHAIN

Shana tova! Wishing everyone a healthy and happy new year! Gideon, Melissa, Maya and Ava Chain xx

CLARK

Shana tova to the whole community – may it be a happy and healthy year for all. Joel, Rachel, Annie, Jonah, Freddie and Reuben

COWEN

Wishing the whole community a Shana Tova and every good wish for 5782. Allan and Sylvia Cowen and family

CROSSLEY

Wishing family, friends and the whole community a happy, healthy and sweet new year. Jackie Crossley

FREIBERGER

Wishing you all a safe, happy and healthy new year. Susan and Brian Freiburger

GLATMAN

The Glatman family wishes everyone a happy new year. Let us hope this year may be the start of peace in our time

GOODMAN

May the coming year bring only good health and happiness to the whole community. With love, Sara, Philip, Avi, Yoram and Shevi xxx

HABIB

Good wishes to the community for a better year ahead and good health for all. Eveleen Habib together with Richard Grant

KAUFMAN

Shana Tova from Corinne, Jeremy, Sam, Emma and David Kaufman and Hannah and Alex Davis

KELLY

Wishing the Dunstan community and the world a year of peace and good health. Natalie, Johnny, Shevy, Shimon and Michal

KURZER

Martin and Guida wish all the community a wonderful year

LEVERE

Shana Tova. Thank you for another year of children's services against the odds! Love the Leverages x

LEVEY

Caroline and Stephen with children and grandchildren wish our wonderful Dunstan Road kehilla a Shana Tova

MORLAND

Claire and Paul, Sonia and Joel, Juliet and Samuel and Adam wish Shana Tova to all the Dunstan Road community

PALMER

Susette and Monroe Palmer hope the coming year will be a happy and healthy one for us all

SCOTT

Best wishes for a happy and healthy new year from Lisa, David, Jacob, Ella and Talia Scott

ULLMAN

Wishing all the community a happy and healthy year, from Edith Ullman

VAISBROT

Aura, Gabriel, Keren, Noam, Dan and Eitan wish the community a happy and healthy New Year

Waidhofer

We wish the community a Happy, Healthy and Peaceful New Year

WASSERMAN

Gordon Wasserman and Kate Gavron wish the GGS Rabbis and their families and the entire community "Ah gut gebentsht yohr"

WITTE

Alan and Rosalind Witte wish everyone a healthy New Year and look forward to seeing you in shul again, especially if you come to chat at the Kiddush!

WOOLICH

Wishing all the Dunstan Road community Shana Tova and a very happy, healthy and prosperous year ahead. Love from Sara, Anthony, Rebecca and Helena Woolich

ZINKIN

Wishing the whole Golders Green community shana tova and well over the fast. Thank you for being such supportive friends, Peter and Jacqui Zinkin



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ANNOUNCEMENTS

MAZEL TOV TO:

BIRTHS

- Alex and Laura Brodtkin, on the birth of Eden
- Gideon and Melissa Chain, on the birth of Ava
- Josh and Samantha Hart, on the birth of Elizabeth
- Rowen Jacobson and Sarah Chasen, on the birth of Ethan
- Jeremy and Leanne Sterngold, on the birth of a baby girl
- Billie and Steven Lightstone, on the birth of Leo
- Daniel Rodney and Victoria White, on the birth of a daughter
- Brian and Myriam Baderman, on the birth of a granddaughter
- Brian Beckman, on the birth of a granddaughter
- Philip and Eve Freiburger, on the birth of a grandson
- Rob Ginsburg and Dina Kaufman, on the birth of a grandson
- Rabbi Harvey and Vicki Belovski, on the birth of a granddaughter
- Denise and Eli Kienwald, on the birth of a grandson
- Ruth Leveson, on the birth of a granddaughter
- Janet and Gerry Patterson, on the birth of a grandson
- Guido Rauch, on the birth of a granddaughter and a grandson
- Sue and Jack Silver, on the birth of a grandson
- Daniel Polden and Miriam Davis, on the birth of a grandson
- Diana Wolfen, on the birth of a granddaughter

BNEI MITZVAH

- Jasmin and Ariel Brettell
- Annie Clark
- Itsy Cohen
- Maya Erkohen
- Samuele Ottolenghi
- Keren Vaisbrot

ENGAGEMENTS

- Jessica Freiburger, daughter of Gillian and Malcolm, to Daniel Borgenicht
- Andrew Greenby, son of Barry and Rhona, to Dorit Ziv
- Tanya Gilbert, daughter of Martin, to Yishai Shimon
- Yoram Goodman, son of Philip and Sara, to Miriam Szelezinger
- Martha Levy and Philip Reid

WEDDINGS

- Tamara Better and Gideon Simberg
- Hannah Kaufman and Alex Davis
- Shevy Kelly and Oleg Giberstein

DEATHS

We send condolences to the families of the following members who have passed away:

- Arnold Cohen
- Jonathan Davies
- Fanny Greenspan
- Betty Malawer
- Naomi Rutstein

WE WISH LONG LIFE TO OUR MEMBERS:

- Brian Baderman, on the passing of his mother
- Myriam Baderman, on the passing of her brother
- Donald Franklin, on the passing of his mother
- Sue Gessler, on the passing of her mother
- Susan Goldstein, on the passing of her mother
- Debbie Herman, on the passing of her brother
- Liz Manuel, on the passing of her mother
- Emilie Morris, on the passing of her husband
- Elaine Sacks and Dina White, on the passing of their husband and father
- James Stern, on the passing of his wife
- Russell Talbot, on the passing of his uncle
- Isadore Wolf, on the passing of his wife
- Peter Zinkin, on the passing of his mother

MAZEL TOV TO THIS YEAR'S CHATANIM AND NESHEY CHAYIL

Chatan Torah	Johnny Kelly
Chatan Bereishit	Allen Lagnado-Agami
Eshet Chayil	Naomi Verber
Junior Chatan Torah	Josh Reuben
Junior Eshet Chayil	Ruby Weissbart

Join us to celebrate Simchat Torah, starting with the tea after Minchah on Shemini Atzeret. Booking link on the GGS website



FROM LEFT: JOHNNY KELLY, NAOMI VERBER, ALLEN LAGNADO-AGAMI, JOSH REUBEN, RUBY WEISSBART

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

- Anat and Ido Atzil
- Claire and Julian Barth
- Nicola and Joel Bensoor
- Dorothy Block
- Laura and Alexander Brodtkin
- Ilan Cohen
- Ashley Fleischer
- Micol and Jonathan Garcia
- Zahava Gilboa
- Alanna Gilmore
- Geoffrey Goldstein
- Natasha Goldstein
- Yoram Goodman
- Efrat and Tim Gordon
- Janine and Daniel Gross
- Samantha and Joshua Hart
- Jessica and Eli Hour
- Sorrell and Jacob Kerbel
- Coren Lass
- Charlotte and David Leeming
- Amanda and Anthony Littner
- Adam Morland
- Rochele Moskovits
- Frances Okyere Abebrese
- Matthew Polden
- Perry Schaffer
- Galit Shapira
- Tamara and Gideon Simberg
- Caroline Soccio
- Tracy and John Steinberg
- Leanne and Jeremy Sterngold
- Samantha Stoll
- Gordon Wasserman



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Jenny Sandler

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FROM
THE SANDLER FAMILY

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